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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the Wilderness Spirit program is to lead and assist children to comprehend, use, and conserve information about the natural resources of the Hill Country of Texas, including its wildlife, plant life, weather and climate, soils and minerals, water, and land use as well as all forms of agriculture and activities of daily subsistence among the people of the area from the period of 1900-1930 to present, as remembered by persons who have lived there since then. Program objectives include education and training by providing self-directed field experiences and access to local resources for exploration and discovery of natural and human resources; historical preservation by collecting and preserving information related to the natural history of the area, such as local traditions, customs, attitudes and values; publication of interviews collected for distribution; and community development by supporting purposeful interaction between younger and older generations in the community and training local leadership for the perpetuation of the project. The procedure for implementing the project is outlined along with projected program expenses for 12 months and general information on the Young Men's Christian Association of the Hill Country. (ERB)

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YMCA OF THE HILL COUNTRY

"A Y WITHOUT WALLS"

WILDERNESS SPIRIT

An Eighth Generation of Texans

Re-Discovers The Land and Its Heritage

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YMCA OF THE HILL COUNTRY

WILDERNESS SPIRIT

I. INTRODUCTION

WILDERNESS SPIRIT leads youth participants out into the world to observe and to draw upon both natural and human resources for self directed learning experiences.

The program is an alternative for the type of education that takes place in the conventional context of classroom and textbook.

Here, the children are led to perceive the world itself as one magnificent "classroom" or "laboratory", and to discover the ways in which adults in their community are "living textbooks" of fact and fiction.

Tapes and manuscripts recording the memories and recollections of the life, the land and the culture of the Texas Hill Country will be the tangible products of the program. Less obvious, but perhaps more important values of the program result from the carefully designed method of collection.

The collection process has been proven (in the "Foxfire", "Loblolly" and other experiences) to amplify tolerance and understanding between younger and older generations. Thus, the program can be expected to benefit the entire community, generating greater respect for the Texas Hill Country itself, and for the people who chose and prepared it as their homeland.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the program is to lead and assist children to comprehend, use and conserve information about the natural resources of the Hill Country of Texas, including, but not limited to its wildlife, plant life, weather and climate, soils and minerals, water, and land use; as well as all forms of agriculture and activities of daily subsistence among the people of the area from the time of before the arrival of the pioneer settlers to the

present, but especially from the period of 1900-1930 onward, as remembered by persons who have lived here since then.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

A. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. **To provide self-directed field experiences:**

The major emphasis of the program is to help the participants to learn more about what interests them, and at a pace that they themselves control. This is especially important to children during the present "back to basics" era in the public schools,when time and resources for individual pursuits are limited.

2. **To provide access to local resources for exploration and discovery:**

a. Natural Resources:

Youngsters will spend most of their time discovering the area in person, by hiking the variations of its land, by boating, fishing and swimming its waters and by tracking, stalking and observing the diversity of its life forms.

b. Human Resources:

After receiving training in interviewing and observation techniques, and in data interpretation, participants will have repeated opportunities to collect first-hand experiences and hands-on demonstrations from individuals who have been nominated by community leaders as persons worthy of interviewing. These are not outsiders brought into the community for a single appearance, but people whom the children will meet again and again on the streets of their own hometown.

B. HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

Natural History:

1. **To collect and preserve information related to the natural history of the area.**

   Many details and much lore exists only in the living memories of local residents. These details are not likely to be translated into written material by the person remembering them. Taped oral interviews provide the best hope for ensuring that these personal observations on the Natural History of the Hill Country are not lost with the passing of that individual.

2. **Regional Culture: To collect and preserve information related to local traditions, customs, attitudes and values.**

   A unique advantage which tape provides is its ability to capture the vocal inflections, rhythms and tones used (often unconsciously) by the speaker. These voice cues provide vital "between the lines" information that helps the historian to see beneath the surface of settings and events and into the hearts and minds of those who experienced them.

3. **Publication: To provide for distribution of materials:**

   Youth participants will be responsible for transcribing a minimum of 1000 words which they select from their narrator's tapes. Other transcriptions will also be made, and together these written materials will be published to help perpetuate the collection process.

C. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. **To support purposeful interaction between younger and older generations in the community.**

Mutual respect will develop between youngsters in their role as conservationists and older adults in their role as sources of experience and understanding. Also, long-term interest and respect will develop among listeners and readers of the recorded material, and these will serve to strengthen the bond of purpose and commitment between the two groups.

2. To train local leadership for the perpetuating of the project.

Among the community's teachers, librarians, artists, writers, journalists, historians and others, many capable individuals are naturally attracted to the program. The project director works to strengthen an association based upon shared interests and to involve these individuals in planning and carrying out program activities. As the value of the program is seen in the community these individuals will provide the leadership that can perpetuate the process.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. REFERRAL

Citizens of the county refer the program to older adults who may have information to share on the program topics. The ongoing file of referrals is prioritized based upon the factors of health, age and availability. The program director meets with each individual to outline their participation as informant-narrator. Those agreeing to make a volunteer commitment are enrolled in the program.

B. YOUTH ENROLLMENT

Youngsters between the ages of 10 and 18 are eligible to participate. The registration form asks the participants to indicate their interests from among a variety of topics which relate to agriculture and outdoor experience. Completion of the form requires the consenting parent or guardian's signature.

C. ORIENTATION MEETING

Each youth registrant attends an orientation meeting. At this meeting, the program director outlines the details and requirements of the program. Those agreeing to the requirements begin participating in program activities.

D. OUTDOOR TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Youngsters in the program are required to participate in a broad variety of attractive outdoor activities designed to acquaint them with the subject matter of the project, and to build their self-confidence and self-discipline as well as their capacities for teamwork. All receive field training in subsistence skills and outdoor living competencies.

E. FIELD VISITS

Regularly scheduled outings to a representative cross-section of ranches, farms, orchards, real estate properties, recreational developments and other land-use sites acquaint the children with the agricultural and other forms of land and natural resource use in the area. Wherever possible, the owner or manager of the property is available to offer the insider's view of what the children are experiencing. A hike or swim is usually part of every visit.

F. RESIDENT EXPERTS

On-site demonstration and discussion sessions on the soil, water, plant and animal life, etc., are often led by volunteer specialists. The director systematically follows up on these sessions by reviewing the material with each child to aid in comprehension and retention. The children are encouraged and assisted to follow up on areas of special interest.

G. INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION TRAINING

Intensive seminar-type training is required of the participants. The focus is upon communications and interview skills. The high point of the training is a

practice interview with some member of the participant's family. Once this tape has been evaluated, the children are ready to begin interviews with adults from the referral file.

H. REFERRAL TEAMS

Youth participants will be paired into research teams according to their interests and readiness. At successive interview they take turns handling either the interview itself or the technical aspects of the interview.

I. INTERVIEW DAY

At the appointed time on the interview day the informant-narrator and the youth research team meet at an outdoor site. Only these three are present during the interview. Each interview lasts a maximum of one hour and a minimum of two interviews with each informant-narrator is required.

J. INTERVIEW SETTING

The informant-narrator selects not only the topic(s) about which he/she will talk, but will also be asked to select a location for the interviews that is appropriate to the topic. The settings will be outdoor sites. Ideally, the informant-narrator selects a location that he/she would like to re-visit due to its special personal significance or its special relevance to the subject matter. Dissertation research will seek to demonstrate that outdoor settings enhance the quality and quantity of information collected during interviews on subject matters of this nature.

K. YEAR-ROUND PARTICIPATION

Interviewing continues throughout the year with the cold months reserved for home-bound narrators. The program director schedules student participation around home and school events and works closely with teachers to make field trips relevant to Science, Shop and Social Studies curriculum areas.

L. TRANSCRIPTION OF TAPES

Once taping is completed with an older adult narrator, the student interviewers are required to transcribe at least one thousand of the narrator's words into legible copy. The students themselves decide which thousand words they most want to transcribe. The only requirements if that there be some logical or aesthetic flow to the material which is chosen for transcription.

M. PHOTOGRAPHY

The student interview team uses a camera in conjunction with the cassette recorder so that photographs of the narrator-informant at the time of the interview may accompany the printed transcription in any subsequent publication of the materials.

N. TAPE DUPLICATION

Each adult narrator is provided with a copy of the original tape so that he/she may review the tape and decide if there are any portions of the recording which the narrator would like to "seal" from public access. These sealed portions are edited out of the tape which the county library will be given for its audio materials collection. The original tape will be placed in the regional oral history archives. One other copy will be retained by the YHC for publication purposes.

O. ORAL HISTORY SHOWCASE

Periodically, showcase productions or "pow-wows" are promoted to the general public. These productions feature older adult narrators who are capable of capturing the interest of a larger audience. Youth participants assist with the production and arrangements, present their own skits, and are responsible for recording the sounds and sights of these gatherings. Outstanding youth participants are publicly recognized for their contributions at these events.

P. COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECT

Culminating the activities of the year is a conservation project which brings all of the

participants in the program together for a hands-on construction or restoration event. Ideally, this project is of special interest to the youth participants, and depends heavily upon the skills and/or know-how of the older adult community.

V. PROJECTED PROGRAM EXPENSE

Twelve Months

A.	**Program Personnel Expenses.** Includes program director and assistant 3/4 time during 3 months of summer. Director only 1/2 time during 9 months of school year.	$ 8,900.00
B.	**Administrative and Support Personnel Expense.** Includes contract fees of word processor and typists, occasional programs and outdoor resource persons, including a deputy program director.	1,400.09
C.	**Travel and Transportation and Per-Diem Expense.** Includes Director and assistant's travel and per-diem expense @ .24 per mile and $8 per day food and miscellaneous.	2,400.00
D.	**Pro-rated YMCA Administrative Cost.** Includes programs 1/5 pro-rated share of overall administrative cost. Telephone, office supplies, utilities, national YMCA support, insurance, printing, contingencies.	950.00
E.	**Program Equipment.** Includes tape recorders, duplicating recorder, remote microphones, 35mm cameras, outdoor training equipment, repair and replacement costs.	2,180.00
F.	**Program Supplies.** Includes cassette tapes, batteries, film, developing, instructional supplies.	1,100.00
	TOTAL PROGRAM COST	$16,830.00

YMCA OF THE HILL COUNTRY

GENERAL INFORMATION

Incorporation

Incorporated in the State of Texas on December 21, 1981, as a non-profit corporation.

Federal Income Tax Exemption

Letter of exemption issued on May 7, 1982, under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Tax Identification Number 74-2221792.

YMCA Charter

Chartered as a Young Men's Christian Association on October 25, 1982, by the National Council of YMCAs of the USA.

Conditions of Charter

The YMCA of the Hill Country was chartered because of its intent to make responsible use of and create understanding of the unique natural and outdoor resources within the boundaries of this region of Texas. All of its programs are presented and conducted under a strong conservation ethic. The YHC represents a new model for the YMCA and is classified as a Geographic Y.

Management

An 18 member volunteer board of directors governs the corporation. They are nominated for their management and program expertise, their past affiliation with the general YMCA movement, and their conservation ethic regarding the Texas Hill Country. The board is made up of independent business persons, attorneys, public administrators, a student, dentist, CPA, geologist, landscape architect, non-profit consultant, social worker and teacher. Members include:

Richard F. Brown, San Antonio
Saundra Brown, San Antonio
Alan Curtis, Round Rock
William DuBose, Bandera
Patricia Eagle, Marble Falls
Gayle Epperson, Austin
Larry Fitzgerald, Austin
Sam Graham, Austin
David Hawes, Austin
Lineaus Lorette, Niederwald
Elizabeth Lyle, Bastrop
Allen Mueller, Austin
Ronald Patterson, Austin
Susan Plettman, Austin
Clyde Prestwood, Jr., Austin
Joe Rogers, Buda
Robert Sheldon, Austin
Don Saathoff, San Antonio

Finance

The fiscal year is January 1 through December 31. Initial funding came from an $8,000.00 individual gift. The current consulting executive director was contracted for in January, 1982, and a charter membership drive was conducted. The initial gift and funds from membership financed the first year of operation.

The YHC has no current or accumulative operating or capital debt and the board of directors manage under an absolute "no-debt" policy. Its three years of operation has been funded by fair share fees, membership, individual and corporate contributions and grants from foundations for special projects. It encourages endowment gifts but currently has no working endowment fund.

FOUNDATION GRANTS: Fentress Brown Foundation for 1982, 1983 and 1984.
Ella C. McFadden Charitable Trust for 1983 and 1984.

Staff

The YHC is staffed by a consulting Executive Director and Associate Director. Both are part time consultants. To reinforce the no-debt policy, a unique and effective relationship has been established. Consulting tasks and fees are periodically approved and released by board action according to the availability of funds. This has insured the financial responsibility of the board and provided clear lines of accountability for the consulting staff.

CONSULTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: James O. Cawley, age 41, of Buda, Texas. Mr. Cawley has been with the YHC since its beginning. He and three incorporators conceptualized the YHC model in 1981. He has been with the YMCA for 25 years and was the executive director of the YMCA of Austin from 1974 to 1982. He is a graduate of Baylor University.

CONSULTING ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR: Jon A. Johnson, age 41, of San Antonio, Texas. Mr. Johnson was a charter member of the YHC. He later requested a consulting relationship with the board for designing and conducting outdoor education and high adventure programs for youth. He is a Ph.D. candidate at Texas A&M University in Outdoor Education. He has spent the past 15 years as a Special Education teacher, guide and outdoor educator.

YMCA OF THE HILL COUNTRY

WILDERNESS SPIRIT ENROLLMENT FORM

CIRCLE THE ONES THAT INTEREST YOU MOST

catfish cedar trees snow dragonflies eggs horsehair wagon roads fossils cholla rabbits oil bones doves hailstones buried treasure cats woodpeckers old barns melons harvesting time lizards gold lumber nets water witches swine swimming holes shells canyons mules tree-bark pollution bulls fiddles oaks gardens moss cranes gemstones lambs clouds dogs snails muddy ground buffalo railroad tracks hawks charcoal kid goats ants antelope roses hermits billy goats old maps peaches footprints meadows rock-quarries wolves ice squash Indians scorpions mountains hides winters bats sand mating-season stone-walls hickory trees bee caves plowing native grasses old cabins prairie-dogs goat milk cotton quartz climate changes spiders herbs woodlands worms erosion fences hunting bandits' hideouts rivers tick-fever firewood natural catastrophes insects caves pecans mines traps turtles medicines strong winds nests planets sheepmen mesquite-beans road-building foxes squirrels sinkholes cotton-ginning cows pitch-darkness prairie fires coyotes grasshoppers mushrooms silver cottonwoods natural boundaries bears surveying water-flow poisons rock-hunting cemeteries honeytrees Indian mounds droughts mohair building materials weeds arrowheads northers teeth noises at night sandbars hickory smoke moonlight well-diggers storms pelicans lakes yucca horns butterflies skulls will ducks walnut trees prospectors excavations granite toads pottery earthquakes edible plants old trails floods windmills acorns plant-diseases cabrito birds sunrises hooves the north star poison ivy dry-land farming chaparral crows cowboys rattlesnakes rain-making cactus mountain lions bricks sheep turkeys creeks giants soil types springs caliche boulders buzzards mistletoe panthers ghost legends ashbeds horses places of special beauty skunks rare plants lichens unusual geological features smokehouses moonshine whisky big ranches mice wool stickerbeds frogs nopalitos rededies or cures ringtails mockingbirds corn landslides mills sleeping outdoors bluffs eagles canning fruit/vegetables strange lights tanning skins blasting dust-storms thickets lightning unleavened bread dams loco-weed porcupine quills stagecoaches tar buckets low-water crossings crickets rawhide stock-tanks sheep-trails post-oak raccoons rope-making sunsets wheat herons Indian summer cisterns deerskins whittling grass-snakes mustang grapes the lost valley jerkey agarito sheepdogs daddy-long-legs sandstone noisy plants dust-devils hand-tools wildflowers spanish moss OTHER _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

NAME _____ AGE____ GRADE_____ TELEPHONE #'S_____

ADDRESS_____ CITY & ZIP_____

PARENTS' NAME(S)_____ PARENT'S SIGNATURE_____

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